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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SINNERS HAVE NO REASON TO COMPLAIN  
OF GOD.

Sinners have always been disposed to find fault with their Maker. Notwithstanding what he has said, in vindication of his character and conduct, they have persisted, from age to age, in their objections against him. This appears from the history of sinners, as it is related in the scriptures. Moses, in his last address to the murmuring Israelites, declares to their faces how they had impeached the conduct of Jehovah. He says, "Ye murmured in your tents and said, Because the Lord *hated* us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to *destroy* us."—This was, indeed, a heavy complaint. It implicitly charged the Holy One of Israel with premeditated malevolence. In Ezekiel's day sinners felt and expressed the same hard thoughts of God. "Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal." Yea, it was a proverb in Israel, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on

edge." This was a public and general impeachment of the divine rectitude in the government of the world. God also complains of another objection, which the sinners in Zion made against him. They intimated that God did not properly regard and reward their religious services. "Ye have said, It is in vain to serve the Lord: and what profit is it, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" Such were the complaints of sinners against God in the days of Moses and the prophets. And if we look into the New Testament we shall find that sinners have made similar complaints against God. The Savior spake the parable of the laborers to illustrate the murmuring spirit of sinners. In the parable, he says, that the laborers, when they received their hire, "murmured against the good man of the house." This statement is designed to represent the feelings and language of sinners against God. In the parable of the talents the slothful servant says to his master, "Lord, I knew that thou

art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strawed."—Such is the language of every sinner in respect to God. He feels and is ready to say, that God is not a good being and does not treat his creatures well. It may be said, that the murmuring sinners, who have been mentioned were Jews who were extremely froward and perverse and worse than other nations. But we find that sinners before their day felt and expressed the same hard thoughts of God. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, represented sinners in his time to be guilty of speaking "hard speeches" against God. And we know, that wherever the gospel has been preached among the Gentiles, sinners have been extremely prone to complain, object and murmur against the divine character and conduct. Sinners, in all parts and all ages of the world, have universally agreed in their sentiments of God, and with one heart and one mouth have openly questioned the rectitude and goodness of his character. They have been disposed to speak against God, the greatest, the wisest and best of beings. It is therefore necessary to speak on God's behalf and to show that sinners have no reason to complain against him. And for this purpose I would offer the following observations.

1. God knows what is best.—God knows himself and is perfectly acquainted with his own perfections. Though he is incompre-

hensible by his creatures, yet he is not incomprehensible to himself. And he certainly knows all his creatures and all his works.—These he made; these he preserves, and with these he is always present. He fills heaven and earth and all places with his presence. There is nothing to limit or circumscribe the knowledge of God. His understanding is infinite. All things always lie open and naked in his sight. He knows the nature and tendency of all things. He sees the connection between all causes and effects.—He understands the construction of mind as well as matter. He knows what moral as well as natural causes will produce.—He knows what men and angels can do and will do. He constantly sees through the universe. He knows the relations of all creatures to their fellow-creatures and to himself. He extends his views from the commencement to the conclusion of time; and perfectly knows the connection between time and eternity. He searches the hearts and tries the reins of all mankind. He knows the natures, the faculties and capacities of all intelligent beings. He knows the highest degrees of holiness and happiness which can possibly exist in the universe of moral agents. He knows the highest good of the universe; and what is necessary to promote it. Hence it is evident, that God knows what is best. He never has been and he never can be at any loss, in respect to the

greatest or smallest events.— Though darkness and ignorance possess the minds of all created beings, yet “God is light and in him is no darkness at all.” God can never err for want of knowledge and wisdom. He can never overlook nor forget any creature, object, or event, amidst the revolutions of time, the duration of eternity, or the immense number, variety, relations and connections of beings and things in the universe. He, who numbers the hairs of our heads and the stars in the sky; he, who weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance; he, who sees all things past, present, and future, at one clear and perfect view, knows what is best.

2. God always means to do what is best. God is always absolutely independent for his existence and for his blessedness. There never has been any thing, either before or after the creation of the world, to bias his mind, or to induce him to do any thing, but what is for the best. His happiness and the general interests of the universe can never be separated. This he always clearly saw. No reason can be assigned, why God should ever mean to do any thing, which is inconsistent with the highest good of the universe. All creatures are his own and stand equally near to him. Hence it is rational to conclude, that he views all creatures in an impartial light and means to do what is, on the whole, best in respect to his numerous family. He always, knows

what is best to be done in heaven, on earth and in all worlds. And no reason can be conceived, why he should not act agreeably to the dictates of his perfect knowledge and unerring wisdom. And this is a powerful, presumptive evidence, that God always means to do what is best. But there is more direct, positive and infallible evidence, that God means to do what is best, *from his goodness*. “There is none good but one, that is God.—God is love.” God is perfect benevolence, God is good unto all. There is not a creature in heaven, on earth, or in any other part of the universe, that God does not love with pure, perfect and impartial benevolence. Now, if God does really love all his creatures and does really know what is best, he must necessarily mean to do what is best. The highest good of the universe, which God always sees and always loves, must always be the great and supreme object of his pursuit. At this object he must have aimed from the early ages of eternity and through all the ages of time. Infinite goodness united with infinite knowledge and wisdom must have laid God under an infinite obligation and a moral necessity to desire and intend what is best in all his conduct.— He must have meant well in all his purposes before the creation of the world. He must have formed as many and as good purposes, as infinite goodness could desire. He must have meant well in determining the number, the nature



and condition of all his creatures. He must have meant well in all his treatment of his creatures through all the stages of their existence. There is not a plainer proposition than this—that perfect wisdom, united with perfect goodness, must dictate what is best. And the light of nature and the light of revelation concur to demonstrate, that God is perfect in wisdom and goodness. The consequence is undeniable, that he always means to do what is best.

3. God always does what he means to do. He always means to do what is best and he always does it. This point admits of the clearest demonstration. The power of God is equal to his wisdom and goodness. He can do every thing. There is none can stay his hand. He can work and none can let it. “He is of one mind and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doeth.” He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. He doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. He hath the hearts of all men in his hand and can turn them as he pleases. He can work in all men and in all rational creatures both to will and to do of his good pleasure. There is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor counsel against the Lord. The heavens, the earth and all created beings are in his hand as the clay is in the hand of the potter. There is not a single creature or object, in the whole circle of creation, that can

prevent, or obstruct, or retard God, in doing what he meant to do from eternity. Hence God absolutely declares in his word, that it is his divine prerogative, notwithstanding the opposition, which the united efforts of creatures can make, to do what he meant to do. He says, “I am God and there is none else, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things, that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.” It is just as certain, as that God exists, that he never has omitted one thing, which he meant to do, nor done one thing, which he did not mean to do. He has universally and constantly been accomplishing his designs, ever since he began to work, whenever that time may have been. He has perfectly gratified his benevolent affections and produced as great a degree of holiness and happiness and as little wickedness and misery, as he intended to produce in his eternal counsel of infinite wisdom and goodness. He has done what he meant to do; and he meant to do what was best; and he always knew what was best.

So much can be truly and safely said on God’s behalf. It is more than can justly be said in behalf of any other being in the universe. Neither angels nor men in their best estate, ever knew what was best. Neither angels nor men were able to propose what was best. Neither angels nor men were able to accomplish



their purposes. Neither angels nor men have any reason to complain, if God charges them with folly.—But not only can more be said in favor of God than in favor of any other being; but as much can be said in favor of God as needs to be said in favor of any being in the universe. If it can be said in truth, that God always knew what was best; and always meant to do what was best; and has always done as he meant to do, then his character stands pure and spotless, in the full brightness and beauty of perfect wisdom and perfect goodness. He is as glorious and amiable as any being can be. He is such a God, as all wise and good beings would desire should exist and govern the universe according to his holy and sovereign pleasure. **JOB.**

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THE GOSPEL ITS OWN WITNESS TO  
THOSE WHO EMBRACE IT.

No. V.

In the former numbers having explained the gospel, shown what is implied in embracing it and having also shown that the gospel is the true way of salvation, it is now proposed to show *that the gospel is the only way of salvation.*

When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to his apostles after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven, he said, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature. He, that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he, that be-

lieveth not shall be damned.”—

When Peter was examined respecting the miracle, that was wrought upon the impotent man, he declared, that it was done by the name of Jesus Christ. And he then said, “This is the stone, which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” And to the church at Corinth Paul says—“According to the grace of God given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”—From these declarations it is evident, that the gospel is the only foundation for the salvation of sinners. And they, who truly embrace the gospel, see that there is no other way of salvation.

1. They see, that there is no other foundation of forgiveness, except the atonement, which has been made by the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. They see the perfect holiness of God. And they know, that God must, from the very holiness of his character, be disposed and obliged to hate, condemn and punish every sinner, if he is treated as he deserves.—They also see the perfection of the divine law, which requires perfect holiness of every rational

creature and condemns every sinner to the pains of endless death. And they clearly see and deeply feel, that they are by nature wholly sinful and perfectly hateful; and that they deserve the wrath of God and the curse of the law forever. They know, that it is impossible, in the very nature of things, to remove or lessen their desert of endless punishment.--- They know, that the holiness, justice and goodness of God will inflict upon their souls the endless torments and pains of hell, if they receive what they deserve for their sinful conduct. And they, who truly embrace the gospel, are understandingly and cordially reconciled to the holiness, justice and goodness of God in the condemnation and punishment of sinners. Nor can God be willing that they should be saved, nor can they be willing to be saved from deserved punishment, at the expence of his glory. If there is no foundation, on which God can be just and yet pardon sinners, they know that their salvation is impossible. It is, therefore, only by the gospel, which exhibits the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ, that they perceive that the salvation of sinners is possible. They perceive, that God can, through the atonement, be just and yet justify every one, who believeth in Jesus.--- But the character and glory of God, the order and happiness of his kingdom, the perfection of his law, their own sinfulness and ill-

desert and the very nature of things convince those persons, who embrace the gospel, that it is impossible they should be saved from the pains of endless death, without the foundation, which has been laid for the pardon of sinners, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. They, who truly embrace the gospel, perceive that they cannot be saved without the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The atonement of Jesus Christ does not remove nor lessen the obligations of sinners to be perfectly holy. Nor does it release any sinner from the condemning sentence of the law, until he truly accepts the salvation of the gospel. Nor will any person ever accept the salvation of the gospel without holy repentance towards God. While sinners hate God and the law, they equally hate Jesus Christ and the gospel of his grace. And the gospel opposes and condemns impenitent sinners as much as the law of God. Without real holiness no human being ever did, or ever will, or ever can truly embrace the gospel and receive and enjoy its holy salvation. Real penitents see, that it is morally impossible that sinners should be saved though Christ has died for the whole world and though salvation be freely and sincerely offered to sinners without exception and without distinction, unless they become, in their moral character, new creatures. But no means nor motives will ever in-

duce one person to repent and turn to God, without the almighty power and sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit. All mankind do, by nature, so perfectly hate God and the law, Jesus Christ and the gospel, that they will reject the offer of salvation and destroy themselves forever, if God does not change their hearts. It is impossible that any person ever should be saved without that holiness, which the Holy Spirit produces by his powerful and special influence. Nor is there the least reason to hope for the existence of real holiness in any human being, but what is founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the gospel and without the sound doctrines of the gospel, there is no reason to hope for that special and powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary to the repentance and salvation of sinners. It is impossible, that any person ever should be saved without real holiness. And it is only by the gospel, that we can perceive any possibility of the sanctification of sinners through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

3. They, who truly embrace the gospel, perceive that the salvation of sinners arises from the eternal purpose of God. They know that salvation is not of themselves, either in its design, foundation, or application. They can perceive no reason to hope for the salvation of any human being, but what is founded on the pur-

pose of God, which he purposed in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. They know that they cannot be saved in opposition to the purpose of God.--- Nor have they, who truly embrace the gospel, any desire to be saved in opposition to his purpose. They have understandingly and unreservedly submitted themselves to his disposal. They know that they have destroyed themselves and deserve to be destroyed forever. Nor can they have the smallest prospect or hope of their justification and sanctification only in agreement with the eternal purpose of God. They know, that if God is not pleased to save sinners for his own sake, no person ever will be saved.--- But they perceive, that, according to the gospel, God gave Jesus Christ a certain number of the human family in the covenant of redemption. According to this covenant Christ came into the world and died on the cross to lay a foundation for the forgiveness of sinners. And according to this covenant, the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies all, who were given to Christ by the Father. But without the gospel and without the doctrine of election, which is peculiarly the fundamental doctrine of the gospel ;-- there can be no reason to hope for the salvation of a single person. It is only in the gospel that God forms and reveals his glorious and gracious purpose to save sinners. This eternal purpose of



God, the atonement of Jesus Christ and sanctification by the Holy Spirit are the substance and essence of the true gospel. These peculiar, essential and fundamental doctrines of the gospel establish and exhibit the only possible foundation for the salvation of sinners. And they exclude the possibility of any other foundation for their salvation. The gospel itself, when it is correctly explained and understood, affords decisive evidence, that it reveals and establishes the only possible foundation for the salvation of sinners.

#### No. VI.

It is proposed, in this number, to conclude the consideration of the subject before us, by the following remarks.

1. Since those, who embrace the gospel, see it to be the true and only way of salvation, the gospel is its own witness and carries in itself infallible evidence of its real divinity. There are two kinds of evidence, that the christian religion is true. One is *external*; and the other is *internal*.—The external evidence in favor of christianity is derived principally from miracles, from the fulfilment of prophecy, from civil history, from ecclesiastical history and from the success of the gospel without the aid of civil power and against Jewish and Pagan prejudices, and against the united exertions of the enemies of all righteousness to suppress and destroy it. From these sources such a

mass of moral evidence has been derived and exhibited in favor of christianity, as has refuted, if not silenced, the most learned and zealous infidels. But though the greater part of mankind have not opportunity nor information sufficient to acquire and weigh this kind of evidence in support of the christian religion; yet they are able to obtain an internal and infallible evidence of the divinity of the gospel, from its nature, consistency, and powerful influence upon their understandings, consciences and affections. The gospel is holy in its nature, consistent in its doctrines, enlightening to the understanding, awakening to the conscience, and transforming to the heart. Its nature and effects are internal and infallible evidences of its divine origin and authority. The best way, therefore, to prove the divinity of the gospel to the apprehension and conviction of all classes of persons, is to exhibit its peculiar and essential doctrines with the greatest plainness and simplicity. In this way Christ preached, as one having authority and carried conviction to the understandings and consciences of the common people, who heard him gladly and profitably. In the same manner the apostles preached and carried conviction to their learned and unlearned hearers. Paul says—“Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty;

not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Though sinners do not experience the transforming influence of the gospel upon their hearts, as christians do; yet they experience the light, which it throws into their understandings and the conviction, which it carries to their consciences. And this light and conviction afford irresistible evidence of its truth and divinity. This internal and infallible evidence in favor of the gospel fully accounts for its rapid spread at first, its extensive prevalence since and its astonishing influence in reforming and transforming both Jews and Gentiles in every part of the world.

2. They, who truly embrace the gospel, will never renounce it for the sake of any false religion. They have such an internal and infallible evidence of the truth, divinity and importance of the gospel and its essential doctrines, that they are able to detect and disposed to resist the most plausible and captivating errors of those, who lie in wait to deceive and destroy. Our Savior forewarned his true followers, that false prophets and false teachers would arise and exert all their art and deceit to corrupt their sentiments and lead them into fatal errors. But at the same time he assured them, that they could not be deceived and destroyed by the

most artful seducers. Both parts of Christ's prediction have been fulfilled. False teachers have arisen and would have deceived the very elect, if it had been possible; but as Christ foretold, it has not been possible to deceive those, who understandingly and cordially embrace the gospel. And the reason has always been the same, that prevented Peter and the other apostles from apostacy. True christians have always known the gospel to be the true and the only way of salvation. And when they have been assailed by seducers to renounce Christ and his sound and saving doctrines, they have been prompted by their consciences and their hearts to say, "To whom shall we go?—We know that Christ has taught us the true and the only way to eternal life; and we see no medium between cleaving to the gospel and sinking into absolute despair."—It is this unction, as the apostle John calls it, which completely preserves real christians from apostacy. He says, "little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for had they been of us they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things. I



have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it and that no lie is of the truth." Though heretics and seducers may employ many specious and plausible arguments in support of their fatal errors, which real christians cannot easily refute; yet they possess that internal and infallible evidence of the truth and importance of the essential doctrines of the gospel, which arises from the sanctifying influence of these doctrines upon their own hearts. They are therefore able to distinguish these doctrines from every lie or false doctrine, which is not of the truth; and consequently they stand beyond the reach of all false teachers and seducers.

3. They, who truly embrace the gospel, will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints and by which they are kept from fatal apostacy. They cannot look upon gross errors in religion with indifference and exercise an unchristian and unlimited catholicism towards all, who profess to believe the divinity of the gospel, while they openly deny and oppose its peculiar and fundamental doctrines. Though they make a distinction between essential doctrines and opinions of smaller importance and exercise christian charity and fellowship towards those, who firmly and honestly profess and maintain the truth as it is in Jesus; yet they will not bid God speed to those, who attack the very foundation of christiani-

ty. They will use every proper and christian method to stop the mouths, repel the arguments and destroy the influence of the subverters of the gospel. They who truly embrace the gospel know of nothing, that is more important or more worthy of their earnest and faithful exertions, than the precious truths of the gospel, upon which they have founded their own eternal hopes and upon which all must found their hopes in order to be saved. Any attempt to unite religious professors, while their sentiments respecting the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are essentially different, directly tends to obscure and depreciate the essence and glory of the gospel itself. Such an attempt tends to conceal and destroy the distinction between truth and falsehood, holiness and sin, saints and sinners, the way to heaven and hell.—They, then, who understand, believe and love the gospel and feel its divine and saving influence, will boldly and earnestly contend for the pure and sound doctrines of the gospel.

4. They who do not cordially and sincerely embrace the gospel, are continually liable to renounce it for any false scheme of religion, which is more pleasing to their corrupt hearts. And any false scheme of religion is more pleasing than the truth to the corrupt hearts of sinners. Though sinners may be thoroughly convinced in their understanding and consciences, that the gospel is the



true and the only way of salvation; yet while their hearts hate and oppose it, they clearly see that it is no way of salvation for themselves. And therefore they are ready to embrace any false scheme of religion, which promises them salvation in their present unholy and depraved state. And every false scheme of religion does promise salvation to those, who are under the entire dominion of their depraved and selfish hearts. Accordingly seducers always attack the heart rather than the understandings and consciences of sinners. They know that they are easily blinded, flattered and seduced through the selfishness and deceit and pride of their own hearts. By the depravity of their own hearts sinners are predisposed to receive any false scheme of religion. The false notions of the Universalists, Unitarians, Arminians and Antinomians agree with the selfish and deceitful affections of sinners, who are prompted by their own hearts to love the darkness of error and to hate and reject the light of truth. Grace in the heart is the only infallible preservative from gross and fatal errors. True believers, and true believers only, who experimentally understand, believe and love the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, are secured against the destructive influence of those, who lie in wait to deceive, and who are zealously, artfully and indefatigably engaged to spread errors and delusions. Peter says to his christ-

ian brethren, "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye knew these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And again it is written—"Be not therefore carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." JOHN.

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SERMONS—No. IV.

GOD IS DISPLEASED WITH INCONSISTENT PROFESSORS.

HOSEA, VII. 8.—*Ephraim is a cake not turned.*

By Ephraim we are to understand the ten tribes of Israel in distinction from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Though the ten tribes forsook the house and worship of God in Jerusalem; yet they still professed to be the people of God, and he continued to call and treat them as such, until they were carried away captive by the king of Assyria. He sent his prophets to reprove them for their idolatry and bring them to repentance and reformation, though they met with little or no success. In this chapter God is speaking by his prophet to Ephraim or the ten tribes, whom he represents as very corrupt and degenerate, and destitute of that uniformity or consistency of conduct, which became

their religious profession. And to give them a clear and striking idea of their criminal imperfection, he compares them to a cake not turned. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." A cake not turned is baked on one side, and not on the other; appears well on one side, and not on the other; and seems to be fit for use, but is not so. This similitude applies to all professors of religion, who resemble the corrupt and degenerate Ephraimites. They are a cake not turned, and their criminal inconsistency is a moral imperfection, which is displeasing to God. Taking the text, therefore, in its true and proper sense, we may draw this just conclusion from it,

That God is displeased with professors of religion, when they do not maintain a uniformity or consistency in their christian course.

I shall first consider when they may be said not to maintain uniformity or consistency in their christian course; and then show why God is displeased with them for it.

1. Let us consider when professors of religion may be said not to maintain uniformity or consistency in their christian course. Though there be no man that liveth and sinneth not; though the best of men fall short of absolute perfection in holiness in the present state of probation; yet in a qualified or scriptural sense, there are many professors, who walk circumspectively, uniformly, and consistently. Though no one of

the patriarchs, prophets, or apostles arrived at sinless perfection in this world; yet they maintained such a beautiful uniformity, and consistency in their religious course, as justly entitled them to the character of just and upright men. And there has been ever since a succession of religious professors, who have deserved the same amiable and distinguished character. But it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that many of those, who have professed the true religion, have not walked worthy of their high and holy calling, by neglecting to maintain a proper uniformity or consistency in their christian course. This renders it proper to inquire when professors of religion may be said to be chargeable with moral imperfection. Here it may be observed,

1. That they do not maintain a proper uniformity or consistency of conduct, when they sometimes perform, and sometimes neglect, the same external duties. It is to be presumed, that most professors of religion sometimes perform some religious duties externally, though they sometimes neglect to perform them. Are there not some professors, who sometimes pray in secret, but sometimes neglect this duty? who sometimes read the Bible and pray in their families, but sometimes neglect these duties? who sometimes attend public worship on the sabbath, but sometimes neglect to attend? who sometimes come to the

table of Christ, but sometimes neglect to come? And are there not some, who oftener neglect some or all these external duties of religion, than they perform them? Who will say, that such professors maintain a proper uniformity in their external conduct? Or who can deny, that they are chargeable with gross inconsistency? When professors sometimes perform, and sometimes neglect the same external duties of religion, it is impossible for them to reconcile and justify their own conduct. They always feel inexcusable and self-condemned.

2. There is another class of professors, who do not maintain uniformity or consistency in their external conduct. I mean such as constantly practice externally every *religious* duty, but not every *christian* and *moral* virtue. Though they keep up the forms of family religion, and generally attend public worship and divine ordinances; yet they appear to carry but very little of religion into their secular employments and common concerns. They do not exhibit that truth in their declarations, nor that fidelity in their promises, nor that honesty in their dealings, nor that sobriety in their conversation, nor that concern for the good of individuals and of public bodies, which the gospel requires of all its professors. The gospel requires them to carry the principles of religion with them into all places, into all companies, and into all their personal and public

concerns, and to govern their conduct towards themselves and all others, by those principles. Christ requires them to do to others, as they would that others should do to them; and the apostle exhorts them, to "do whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, and whatsoever things are of *good report*." The gospel requires the practice of every christian and moral virtue, as much as the practice of every secret, private, and public duty of devotion. Those professors of religion, therefore, who observe the duties of devotion, but neglect the practice of christian and moral virtues, are grossly inconsistent. They are like the cake not turned. They appear well on one side, and not on the other. They resemble those whom the prophet Jeremiah described and condemned, who cried, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these; while they oppressed the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed innocent blood, and walked after other gods to their hurt. It must be further observed,

3. That professors of religion do not maintain uniformity or consistency in their conduct, when they practise all religious duties and moral virtues, without true love to God or man. There were many such professors in the Jewish church, before Christ's day, and



especially while he dwelt on earth. He often had occasion to speak to them and of them. He described, reproved, and condemned them, in the strongest terms. He said, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; *but their heart is far from me.*"—He said, "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, for ye pay tithe of mint, annise and cummin, and have *omitted* the weightier matters of the law, *judgment, mercy, and faith*: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye strain at a knat, and swallow a camel. Ye make clean the *outside* of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye also *outwardly appear righteous* unto men, but *within*, ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." These persons were just like Ephraim, "*a cake not turned.*" There was no uniformity or consistency between their *external* conduct and *internal* views and motives. But have there been no such professors since their day? If there are any such now, they certainly do not maintain a uniformity or consistency of character. I now proceed to show,

II. Why God is displeased with inconsistent professors. Several plain and obvious reasons may be mentioned. And,

1. God is displeased with such professors, because they break covenant with him. They have

publicly and solemnly entered into covenant with God, in which they engaged to love him supremely, and to obey him constantly and universally. When the children of Israel made a public profession of religion, they bound themselves to obey not only the ten commands, but all that the Lord had said unto them. They took an oath to pay a cheerful, universal, and persevering obedience to the divine commands. They made no exception or reserve. And God seemed to place confidence in their sincerity and faithfulness. "For he said, surely they are my people, *children that will not lie.*" But he was disappointed. For "nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues: for their *heart* was not right with him, neither were they *stedfast in his covenant.*" For which "he was wroth, and greatly *abhorred Israel.*" Those who make a public profession of religion at this day, lay themselves under the same solemn vows and engagements to give themselves wholly to the Lord, and to be uniformly obedient to his commands. Whenever, therefore, they are inconsistent and insincere in their obedience, and unsteadfast in their covenant, God has reason to be displeased with them for their violation of their covenant vows and engagements. He looks on their hearts as well as outward appearance, and always knows whether they sometimes obey, and

sometimes disobey his commands ; whether they obey some of his commands and not others ; and whether they never obey any of his commands from a pure and upright heart. And he is always justly displeased, if they fail of uniformity or consistency in all, or any of these respects.

2. God is displeased with inconsistent professors, for the reproach they bring upon themselves and upon professors in general. The world understand the nature and obligation of a religious profession, and are both able and disposed to censure those, who do not uniformly walk agreeably to it.— For they imagine by condemning inconsistent professors, they implicitly and virtually justify themselves. They think and say, that they have never been guilty of such gross insincerity and hypocrisy, as to *profess* to obey God, while they never did and never intended to obey him. But they do not stop here, but take occasion from the conduct of inconsistent professors, to reproach the most amiable, uniform and consistent christians. They insinuate that the consistent are just like the inconsistent *at heart*, and though they have not yet, they will sooner or later discover their insincerity and inconsistency. This is what Christ fore-warned his true followers to expect from the world. He told them, “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I

have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Inconsistent professors are the occasion of bringing great reproach not only on themselves, but on all who name the name of Christ. And by this, they throw a stumbling-block before the world, and retard, if not prevent some sincere friends of Christ from performing an act of grateful obedience to his dying command.— They symbolize with the insincere and inconsistent scribes and pharisees, to whom Christ said, “Woe unto you : for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are *entering* to go in.” I may add,

3. Insincere and inconsistent professors do highly displease God because they not only bring a reproach upon the *profession* of christianity but upon *christianity itself*. The world claims a right to judge of religion by the effects which it appears to have upon the hearts and lives of those who profess it. And they choose to judge of it by the effects which they pretend it has upon the hearts and lives of inconsistent professors. They say it makes them worse, instead of better, than non-professors, and even pagans and savages. This has been lately said before the most august assembly in the United States ; and this has often been said by both pagans and savages in respect to nominal christians. These remarks are altogether *unfounded*, because it

is not christianity itself that makes inconsistent professors act so inconsistently and criminally, but the *want* of it. If they possessed the pure spirit, which christianity recognises, and acted it out, it would throw what is called natural religion, and every species of false religion into the *shade*, and expose its falsehood, absurdity, and turpitude to just detestation and contempt. But it cannot be denied, that the conduct of inconsistent professors, does give great occasion to infidels, pagans, and savages to think and speak reproachfully of the religion of the Bible. The conduct of inconsistent professors is one of the greatest obstacles or impediments that ministers of the gospel meet with, in preaching the gospel to savages, or pagans, or infidels, or the men of the world in general. Inconsistent professors, therefore, do more to obstruct and injure the cause of religion, than any other description of men. Though all the enemies of religion despise and condemn their conduct, yet they employ it as the best weapon they can use to combat the doctrines and duties of christianity, which they hate. Hosea says of Ephraim, *who was a cake not turned*, "that he provoked God to anger most bitterly." God is highly displeased with inconsistent professors of religion, because they violate their own solemn vows and engagements, because they bring reproach upon themselves and all other professors, and because they

strengthen the hearts and hands of the enemies of all righteousness.

It only remains to improve the subject.

1. It appears from what has been said, that those who entertain a hope of having experienced a saving change, ought to make a solemn pause, and critically and impartially examine the nature of the new views and exercises they have had, before they make a public profession of religion. It is a solemn and interesting transaction to enter into covenant with God, and bind themselves to love him supremely, and obey him constantly and universally as long as they live, and as long as they exist.— All this is implied in making a public profession of christianity, which it is extremely dangerous for any one to do, who has not received the grace of God in truth. All persons are naturally disposed to trust in their own hearts, and to think they are better than they are; especially at a time when they are awakened to attend to their spiritual and eternal concerns. They are very apt to imagine, that their strong and ardent desires after *happiness* are sincere desires after *holiness*; that their *worldly* sorrow is *godly* sorrow; and that their *self-condemnation* is *self-abasement*, and *genuine submission*. Their selfishness puts on the appearance of benevolence, which leads them to mistake false love for true love, false repentance for true repentance, and false submission for real reconciliation to



God. But they have no right to deceive themselves; and if they would examine themselves critically according to the rules of the gospel, they would not build their eternal hopes upon such a false and sandy foundation; nor presume to profess supreme love to God, until they had the witness in themselves, that they possessed the spirit of adoption. Those, who have this evidence of their gracious state, may safely enter into covenant with God, because they stand entitled to the spirit of promise, and have solid ground to believe, that he who has begun a good work in them, will carry it on until the day of Christ. But those, who make an insincere profession, are in danger of living an inconsistent life; and of doing great injury to the cause they profess to promote. It seriously and deeply concerns all those, therefore, who think of making a public profession, and joining with the true friends of God in celebrating divine ordinances, to regard the apostolic caution, "Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

2. It appears from what has been said, that it is less difficult for professors of religion, to determine their own true character, than for non-professors to determine theirs. Professors have formed a standard for themselves. Their own public profession is a good standard. They know what they *desired* and

*intended* to do, when they made their profession, and what at that time, they *bound* themselves to do. It is only for them to look at their own rule of duty, and compare their *views*, and *feelings*, and *conduct*, with that rule, and they may easily determine whether they *have*, or *have not*, kept covenant with God. Non-professors have not such a standard, with which to compare themselves. Though they may have made serious resolutions; yet they have never sworn before God and man, that they would live according to their resolutions; and consequently it is not so easy for them, as for professors, to know whether they have ever had the spirit of true obedience, or dealt deceitfully with God. And we have reason to fear, that many neglect to make a public profession of religion, for the sake of being more at liberty, to neglect keeping their hearts with all diligence, and to neglect many duties, which professors bind themselves to perform. Hence they keep themselves *in doubt*, whether they *have*, or *have not*, experienced a saving change. But it is not so easy for professors to keep themselves *in doubt*. They know, that the vows of God are upon them, and they frequently have proper occasion to compare their hearts and lives with an infallible standard, and are constrained to form an opinion in *favor*, or *against* their sincerity. This makes it more easy for *them*,

than for *others*, to determine whether their hearts are right with God or not.

3. It appears from what has been said, that professors have reason to expect, that the world *will* judge of their sincerity, by their profession. They can easily discover whether they act consistently with their own standard, which makes no allowance for the least moral imperfection. And if they perceive, or think they perceive, that they do not act consistently, they are ready to construe the least inconsistency as an evidence, that they are *hypocrites*, or at least *hypocritical*. Though this be unscriptural and uncandid, yet professors have reason to expect it from the world. They are, therefore, properly exhorted, "to walk circumspectly, and avoid all *appearance* of evil." Christ represents them as the *salt* of the earth, and the *light* of the world; and it is of serious importance, that they cause their light so to shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

4. This subject admonishes any, who are conscious to themselves, that they have not maintained a proper uniformity or consistency in their christian course, to repent and reform. They are to be their own judges according to their own standard; and they are very competent to form a just estimate of their *internal* views and exercises, and of their *external* conduct.— Though neither professors nor

non-professors, have ever complained of them; yet if they are conscious of self-inconsistency, it becomes them to purify their hearts, and retrace their path; and in time to come, to keep themselves in the love of God. It is more than possible, that this may be the immediate duty of some, who have named the name of Christ. It is emphatically a day of declension, and there may be some, who have not been steadfast in keeping covenant with God.— This calls for self-condemnation, self-abasement, and godly sorrow.

Finally, this subject calls upon all professors to examine themselves before they come to the table of the Lord. You have often read the covenant you have made with God, or heard it read. But you will permit me to bring to your recollection the substance of it. You engaged to take God for your supreme portion, and to derive your highest happiness from the service and enjoyment of him. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to keep his sabbath holy from beginning to end. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to walk in your houses with a perfect and upright heart, and to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to attend public worship and divine ordinances from sabbath to sabbath, and from time to time. Have you uniformly performed these duties? You engaged to exercise brotherly love

and brotherly care and watchfulness towards your brethren. Have you uniformly done it? If you would be so good to yourselves, as to compare your hearts and lives with the vows you have made to God, you may draw a just conclusion, whether you are like "*Ephraim, a cake not turned.*" And if you should find, that you have not maintained that *external* and *internal* consistency, which your profession requires; go to God to heal your backslidings, and grant you that peace, which nothing but a well-founded evidence of his pardoning mercy can afford you.

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THE NATURE OF THE WILL.

It is of great importance to have clear and just ideas upon this subject, which has been so much agitated by different denominations of christians. Almost all, who have treated upon the will, have used the term ambiguously and affixed two very different meanings to it. They have commonly, if not universally, considered the will to be both a *faculty* and an *exercise* of the mind. Mr. Edwards says, "The will is plainly that, by which the mind chooses any thing. The faculty of the will is that faculty, or power, or principle of the mind, by which it is capable of choosing. An act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice."\* According to this definition of the word *will*, it signifies

\*Enquiry, p. 2. London edition.

two very different things; namely, a *faculty* of the mind and an *exercise* or choice of the mind. But it is to be questioned whether the word *will* ought ever to be used to denote a faculty of the mind.—A faculty of the mind is a power of receiving ideas independently of the will. Thus perception is a faculty of receiving ideas independently of the will. It does not depend upon the will, when our eyes are open at noonday, whether we shall perceive the light of the sun or not. We must see the light, whether we do or not choose to see it. And this holds true of all other sensible objects. Our perception of them does not depend on the will. The conscience is another natural faculty of the mind, or a power of receiving ideas independently of the will. We are so formed, that when a virtuous and a vicious action are plainly represented, we cannot help approving of virtue and disapproving of vice. It does not depend upon our choice, whether an act of murder shall appear virtuous or vicious. Now, if a faculty of the mind be a power of receiving ideas independently of the will; then it is absurd to suppose, that the will is a *faculty*; or a power of receiving ideas independently of itself. The will is not a faculty, or principle, or power, or appetite, or instinct, or taste of the mind. All these are things, in which the mind is totally passive and does not act at all.—It is commonly and justly suppos-



ed, that Adam lost none of his natural faculties by eating of the forbidden fruit ; and that none of his posterity have lost any of their natural faculties in consequence of that act. But it is certain that all mankind are naturally destitute of a *will* to love God. And if this want of a will were the want of a *faculty* to love God, then they would be under a natural inability to love him : and of consequence, entirely excusable for not loving him. The truth is, all men possess all the natural faculties, which are necessary to constitute them moral agents and lay them under moral obligation to love God ; or to choose good and hate evil.— Their *want of will* to choose and to do right, therefore, cannot be a want of faculty, principle, or power to choose and refuse, or to act as free moral agents.— The will never was, either before or since the apostacy of Adam, a faculty of the mind. But it is something entirely different from every power, faculty, or principle of the soul. It is, in a word, the action or exercise of the mind. The will consists in voluntary affections. It is loving or hating, choosing or refusing, in which the mind is altogether active.— In this sense the word will is always to be used by those, who employ it. It never properly means a principle, or power, or faculty, or disposition, or instinct of the mind ; but only choice, action, or volition. The will is a general term, which includes and signifies

all the moral exercises of the mind.

It is properly used in the same latitude as the word heart, which comprehends every exercise of mind, that has a moral quality, or which is either praise or blameworthy. Some exercises of the mind are immanent and produce no external actions. And some are imperative or commanding exercises of the mind and produce external actions. But all the exercises of the mind, that are of a moral nature, whether they do or do not produce external actions, belong to the will. The will, therefore, always means nothing more nor less, than the free, voluntary exercises of the mind.— What has been said respecting the nature of the will suggests the following remarks.

1. When the will of a sinner is renewed, or his heart is changed, there is not an implantation of a new principle, but only the production of new exercises. This sentiment respecting the renovation of the will is agreeable to scripture, reason and experience. It is agreeable to scripture, which represents regeneration to consist in the production of holy affections. The apostle says, “ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us.” Again he says —“ The fruit of the Spirit is love.” And John says “ Love is of God ; and every one, that loveth, is born of God.”—It is agreeable to reason. Mankind need no other change than a change of their

hearts from the exercise of unholy affections to the exercise of holy affections. They need no new principle, faculty or power of the mind.—And it is agreeable to experience. For when sinners are renewed, they do not find that they have any new principle, faculty or power. But they do find that they have new and holy affections. They do find in themselves holy love and its great and happy effects.

2. Sinners are under the same obligation to love God before as after they are renewed. They are as able to love God; they have the same power, ability, or capacity to love God before they are renewed as afterwards. The law has the same authority over unrenewed and renewed sinners. And their conscience coincides with the law and binds sinners to love God. Obligation to do right is wholly founded upon the rational powers and natural capacity of intelligent beings. If sinners are not bound, before their hearts are changed, to love God, then they transgress no obligation and are not sinful.

3. Men are as active in regeneration as in sanctification. Regeneration is the commencement of holy affections. Renewed sinners are as active in their holy affections, when they first love God as in any subsequent exercise of holiness.

4. It is a dangerous error, that sinners must have a new principle implanted, before they can em-

brace the gospel. This is the opinion of many persons. But it is repugnant to the law of God, which requires and binds all rational creatures to be perfectly holy.—It is repugnant to the gospel of Christ, which requires and binds sinners to repent and believe without delay. It opposes the dictates of conscience, which shows every sinner that he is wholly criminal and blameable for every unholy affection. Besides, if sinners *cannot* embrace the gospel without the implantation of a new principle, they are under no obligation to embrace it and are totally excusable for their impenitence and unbelief.

5. Sinners are just as capable of loving and believing the gospel as of performing external actions.—They think there is a difference. They suppose, that they can perform external actions without a new principle or faculty, but that they cannot exercise love or faith without one. But multitudes of sinners have loved and believed the gospel without any new faculty of mind or new principle of action. They have done it by the proper exercise of the rational powers, which are common to saints and sinners, holy and unholy creatures. It requires no more power to love God, repent of sin and believe the gospel than it requires to perform any external action.

6. It is as easy to point out the duty of sinners as the duty of saints

For their duty is the same. God says to all rational creatures, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

PETER.

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REMARKS ON THE UNION OF DIVINITY AND HUMANITY IN THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

It is a direction of our Savior, in reference to a particular subject, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." We are not, however, obliged to confine this direction to the particular subject, in reference to which it was originally given. It is capable of being used in a far more extended sense. It may, without impropriety, be considered as constituting a general direction; forbidding us to put any thing asunder, which God joined together.

*It is my present object to consider this direction in reference to the union in Christ of the divine, and human nature.*

To prepare the way for the proposed remarks upon the subject, I shall adduce several passages of the inspired volume, which appear clearly to prove, that Christ does, indeed, unite in his character both divinity and humanity. In proof of the doctrine of the *divinity* of Christ, may be adduced the following passages: "Unto us a child is born—and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father.*" "In the begin-

ning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God.* All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made. And the *Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us." "In him dwelleth all the *fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" "I and my Father are one." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God.*" "Great is the mystery of godliness; *God was manifest in the flesh.*" "Christ, who is over all, *God blessed for ever.*" These are a few among many passages, which might be adduced in proof of the Savior's divinity. And these passages, if any language could, conclusively prove, that he does, indeed, possess a nature truly divine.

There are passages, however, equally clear and explicit, which assert the doctrine of the *humanity* of Christ. Such are the following: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus.*" "*This man*, because he endureth forever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."—"He is despised and rejected of men—a *man of sorrows*, and acquainted with grief." "Jesus of Nazareth, *a man* approved of God among you by miracles and wonders." Than these declarations, none could be more explicit.—They clearly prove, that Christ is literally and properly *man*. But



those passages above adduced clearly prove, that he is literally and properly *God*. Since, then, Christ is both *God* and *man*, the inference is unavoidable, that he unites in himself both divinity and humanity. Yet, conclusive as is the evidence, that Christ is both divine and human, to put his *divinity* and *humanity* asunder, is what is often attempted. In the early times of the christian dispensation, there arose a certain sect, which denied the *humanity* of Christ.—Finding in the Bible conclusive evidence of his divinity, and concluding, that he could not be both divine and human, they explained away or rejected those passages, which speak of his humanity, and maintained, that he was a *man* in *appearance* only—not in reality. At the present time, great numbers verge to the opposite extreme. By them the doctrine of the *divinity* of Christ is denied. Finding, in the Bible, numerous passages in proof of the *inferiority* of Christ to the Father; of his being, indeed, properly *man*, and assuming the point, that he cannot be both *God* and *man*, they explain away or reject as interpolations all those passages, which assert the doctrine of his divinity, and maintain, that he is *man* and *only man*, as was Moses, David, or Paul. But to whichever of these extremes we run, we attempt to put asunder what are indissolubly joined together—the *divinity* and *humanity* of Christ. But why does any person attempt to put

these asunder? Is it for want of conclusive evidence, that Christ is both divine and human? But the evidence in proof of the doctrine of his *divinity* is as conclusive, as is the evidence in proof of the doctrine of his *humanity*. We are as much obliged, by the many and positive declarations of the Bible upon the subject, to believe, that Christ is a *divine being*, as we are, by the many and positive declarations of the Bible upon the subject, to believe, that he is *man*. Our authority for believing the *former* is just the same as our authority for believing the *latter*; *the express word of God*. And unless we are prepared to tread on infidel ground, we cannot deny, either that Christ is *divine*, or that he is *human*; but we must admit and believe both. But will any say, this is a mysterious doctrine—too mysterious to be believed? That it is a mysterious doctrine, is freely admitted. It is expressly so denominated by an apostle. He says—“*Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.*” But the mystery, which this doctrine involves, furnishes no good reason, why the doctrine should not be believed. Though the doctrine is, in some respects, mysterious, it yet involves no contradiction. *How*, and in what particular *manner*, divinity and humanity are united in Christ, we cannot tell. But to say, that these *are* united in him, involves no absurdity. The fact is, the world is full of mystery. Short-sighted mor-

tals cannot comprehend the mode of their own existence. *That man has a body and a soul, which are, in some manner, united and mutually affect each other*, is an acknowledged truth. But who can explain the precise manner, in which the body and the soul of man are united, and affect each other? *That they may be united*, we perceive, involves no contradiction. But *how* they are united, we cannot tell.—It is to us mysterious. Shall we, then deny, that the body and the soul of man *are* united, and mutually affect each other, simply because we cannot tell *how* this is accomplished? This, to be consistent with ourselves, we must do, if we deny, that Christ is both divine and human, simply because we cannot perceive *how* divinity and humanity can be united in him. For, the union in Christ of divinity and humanity is attended with no greater mystery, than is the union in man of a material, mortal body, and an immaterial, immortal soul. Are we, then, prepared to take the broad ground of infidelity, and to believe nothing, which we cannot, in *all respects*, understand? If we do take that ground, our belief will be, indeed, circumscribed; since there are but few things, with which we are acquainted, which are not, in *some respects*, mysterious. But let it be far from us to take the broad ground of infidelity, which has been mentioned. Rather let us firmly believe, that Christ *does* unite in his character divinity and

humanity: and, because this doctrine is taught by numerous and positive declarations of the inspired volume.

The view of the doctrine, which has now been taken, harmonizes all the declarations of the Bible upon the subject. If we only keep distinctly in mind the fact, that Christ unites in himself both divinity and humanity, we shall never be at a loss what to do with any passages relating to his character, which we may find in the sacred volume. When we find passages, in which he is denominated *God*—which ascribe to him divine attributes and works—and represent him to be a proper object of religious worship, we shall know, that all such passages relate to him as a *divine* Being.—But when, on the other hand, we find passages, which represent him as being *inferior* to the Father—as praying to the Father—as suffering and dying upon the cross—as being, indeed, *man*, we shall know that all such passages relate to his *humanity*. It is believed, that, by many, who believe in the divinity of our Savior, the point, which has been illustrated, is not sufficiently considered.—They believe, that Christ is *divine*. But not, at the same time, considering, that he is also *human*, they are perplexed with those declarations of the Bible, which, at first view, appear to be inconsistent with the doctrine of his supreme divinity. And when such passages are adduced by an objector,

how to reconcile them with the Savior's divinity, they know not. —But let the reader only keep distinctly in mind, that Christ unites in his character both *divinity* and *humanity*, and he will never have occasion to be perplexed upon this point. To an objector, who adduces those passages, which represent Christ as being *inferior* to the Father with a view to show, that he is not a *divine* Being, you may reply, that you as firmly believe in the *humanity* of Christ, as he possibly can; but those passages of the sacred volume, which he adduces, relate, simply to the *humanity* of the Savior, and, therefore, do nothing toward proving, that he is not *supremely divine*. F.

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LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF A  
CHURCH TO THE PASTOR.

March 30, 1819.

BELOVED PASTOR—As in the presence of God, before whom I must one day stand and give an impartial account of the deeds done in the body, I would give you an account of some of the views and feelings of my mind since the reformation in this town, in the year 1809. I had some serious thoughts about religion. I thought it was necessary, and that I could not be happy after death without it. But I was so fond of gay company and vain amusements, that I thought I would delay it, until a more convenient season. I thought I might

perhaps, have an opportunity on a sick bed, to make my peace with God. I felt greatly opposed to the reformation, and was sorry when I heard that any were brought from nature's darkness into God's marvellous light; especially if they were young persons. I did not like to hear conversation about religion. But at last I began to feel no wish to go into such vain company, as I had before frequented; and I thought that those, who had religion, did not want me with them. I felt very serious for some time. But one afternoon, a little before the sun set, I was in the house alone and suddenly I felt, as I thought, such light and love break upon my mind, that I could hardly contain myself. I thought I had a view of my Savior, with arms extended to receive me. I could sing and pray and had no doubt but I had passed from death unto life. I thought I took great satisfaction in reading, praying, going to meeting, and being with christians, and hearing them converse upon spiritual things. I went forward and joined the church. I thought the things I once hated, I now loved, and the things I once loved, I now hated. I thought I felt anxious for those, that were dead in sin, to be made alive by Christ. Thus I went on almost for ten years.—Perhaps but few in that time were more particular in the outward forms of religion. But,  
“No outward forms can make us clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within.”



When the reformation commenced, I felt as if all was not right. It appeared to me, that I never had felt as some did, that were awakened. I began to think that I never had seen the plague of my heart; that I never had felt such distress on account of sin.— But I thought I had felt the happy feelings, that they expressed and then I would feel quite contented for a while; but did not feel just as I wished. Sometimes in meeting it would be mentioned concerning feeling the plague of our hearts, that we must feel like lost condemned sinners, before we could receive Christ in our hearts, the hope of glory. I knew I never had any realizing sense of my awful situation. It appeared to me, as if what was said about knowing the plague of our hearts was spoken wholly for me. I believe the Spirit of the Lord set it home to my conscience. Thus I continued sometimes hoping and sometimes fearing, until Saturday the 20th of March, it came so powerfully upon me, that I had never seen the plague of my heart, that I could have no peace. I then looked back to see how much love and joy I had experienced; how much I had prayed, read and been to meeting. I thought if I was not a christian, I should not have had so much love for such things, but I could find no peace. I took the Bible to see if I could find any comfort there, but almost the first words my eyes glanced upon

were—“purge out the old leaven.” These words powerfully impressed my mind. I tried two other books, but found no comfort. I was then constrained to give up my hope. I felt much distressed on account of sin, which before had appeared but small. I found it was not outward sins only, that would condemn us, but the secret thoughts of the heart. I viewed the day of judgment to be near, an awful eternity before me, and an angry God above me. I knew not which way to turn. I was hedged up on every side. Sometimes I thought there was no mercy for me. I knew that neither men nor angels could help me. I thought if the Lord should have mercy upon me, it would be mercy indeed. I sometimes thought I should be willing to have one of my limbs cut off if I could obtain peace of mind by it. Thus I continued until Sabbath evening, 28th of March, I went to meeting and humbly trust the Lord enabled me to submit to his righteous government. I felt willing to be in his hands to be disposed of as was most for his glory. My burden left me. I then found sweet peace and joy in believing. I think I have felt that love and reconciliation to God, which I never before experienced. And it is by the grace of God I am what I am. Not unto me, but unto his name be all the glory.

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## SCHEMES OF SERMONS.

## No. 1.

## FAITHFUL MINISTERS IN STRAIGHTENED CIRCUMSTANCES.

*In Damascus the governor under Aretas, the king, kept the city of Damascus with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket was I let down by a wall and escaped his hands.*

II. Cor. XI. 33.

*Doctrinc.*—Faithful ministers of the gospel are liable to be brought into very straightened circumstances.

I. Show in what respects they are liable to be brought into very straightened circumstances. They are liable to be straightened in the following respects. 1. Their supposed qualifications for the ministry. 2. Their ability ever to become properly qualified for their office. 3. The evidence of their own piety. 4. Their temporal subsistence. 5. The inconstancy of christian friends. 6. The deceitfulness of unfaithful professors. 7. The opposition of avowed enemies. 8. The stratagems of satan.

II. Show why faithful ministers are liable to be brought into such straightened circumstances. 1. To try their faithfulness. 2. To promote their instruction. 3. To humble their spirit. 4. To increase their usefulness. 5. That they may be induced to trust in God. 6. That they may experience his loving-kindness. 7. That they may be prepared for spiritual enjoyments.

## IMPROVEMENT.

1. If such trials are necessary

to prepare ministers of the gospel for such purposes, then a large portion of professed ministers are of little worth in respect to the great objects of their office.

2. If such trials be necessary to prepare ministers of the gospel for the great objects of their office, then the popular method of preparing young men for the ministry is not remarkably beneficial.

3. If God for such purposes brings his ministers into straightened circumstances, then his ways are exceedingly different from the ways of men in respect to his ministers.

4. We may see from this subject how such ministers, as have been eminent in the service of God, have been raised to their eminence.

5. Such ministers, as have not passed through severe and decisive trials, have reason to tremble for themselves.

6. Such ministers, as God has preserved and delivered in the midst of heavy trials, are bound to make a proper improvement of their trials—to be thankful—humble—joyful—faithful and bold.

## QUESTION.

When a person is admitted into a church, it is on credible evidence, that he is a true christian.—Now can this connexion be dissolved by excommunication, unless this evidence be destroyed in the minds of them who admitted him to their number?

E. A.

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

### PALESTINE MISSION.

Messrs. Fisk and King were in Egypt about three months, during which time they distributed, or gave away for distribution, 3,700 tracts. They also gave away 256 copies of the Bible or parts of it, and sold 644 (in all 900) for 2378 piastres, or about 183 dollars.

We now commence the description of their journey from Cairo to Jerusalem, in the course of which they passed through the same desert, though not the same part of it, which the children of Israel passed through, when escaping from Egyptian bondage to the promised land of their inheritance and rest.

#### *Commencement of the Journey.*

*Monday, April 7, 1823.* Soon after sunrise an Arab Shekh came with our camels. We had engaged 13, and were to pay six dollars and a half for each, for the journey from Cairo to Jaffa. Four were for ourselves and servant, one for our guide Mustapha, one for water, one for provisions, four for our trunks of books and clothes, and two for the books of the Bible Society and the Jews' Society. We had purchased four goat skins and four leather bottles, in which to carry our water.

We had hoped to find a caravan going through the desert, but finding it not likely that one would go for some weeks, we prepared to set out alone.

At 9 o'clock we took leave of Mr. Salt and his family, and rode out of town; and after arranging our baggage, commenced our journey at ten in regular order for Syria. As we started, a Turkish Dervish and two or three others joined our caravan. We passed a little way from Matarieh, and the obelisk of On or Heriopolis. Till one o'clock we rode in the edge of the wilderness, with its immense extent stretching away to the right, and the fertile plains of the Nile to the left.—At one our road led us into the fields, but still near the desert. At nearly 4 o'clock, after riding more than five hours, course E. N. E. we pitched our tent on the sandy plain near the village of Abu-Sabel. Here a number of

Mussulmans and several Armenians joined our caravan. They had been waiting at the village for a caravan to pass, with which they might go through the desert.

In the evening we observed the Monthly Concert of Prayer.

*Tuesday, 8.* We arose at 5, and at 6 resumed our journey. At 8, we passed a village in a large grove of palm-trees. At half past 11, having rode on with our guide, trotting our camels till we were almost out of sight of the caravan, we stopped to rest under the shade of a tree. Here we felt the force and saw the beauty of the comparison, "like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The caravan came up in half an hour, and we went on. At one, after riding seven hours, course N. and N. E. we pitched our tent on the road near the village Bilbes. Found the thermometer in our tent at 85 degrees. In our room at Cairo it had been for some time from 70 to 76 degrees. We have hitherto had fertile fields on our left hand, and the barren desert on our right. In looking off upon the desert we have observed at a distance the appearance of water. The illusion is perfect, and did we know that it is a mere illusion, we should confidently say that we saw water. It sometimes appears like a lake, and sometimes like a river. As you approach it, it recedes or vanishes. Thus are the hopes of this world, and the objects which men ardently pursue, false and illusive as the streams of the desert.

#### *Account of the Caravan.*

*Wednesday, 9.* Bilbes being the last village before crossing the desert, our attendants were employed in getting things for themselves and their beasts, and we did not set off till half past nine. Several Turks, Arabs and Armenians here joined our caravan. After entering the desert, we counted the persons belonging to the caravan, and found the whole number 74, with 44 camels, 57 asses, one mule, and one horse. Several of the camels are loaded with merchandize, and most of the camel drivers perform the whole journey on foot. It may be interesting to some of our friends to see a list of oriental names, and to learn with what a



"mixed multitude," we passed through the "great and terrible wilderness."

There were *Mussulman Dervishes*, viz: Hadgi Mustapha, of Jerusalem; Hadgi Abnool, Hadgi Khalcel (i. e. the beloved,) Hadgi Saveer, from Bokkaria; Hadgi Kahman (i. e. the merciful) Hadgi Mohammed, and Abdallah (i. e. the slave or servant of God) from near Astrachan.

*Arabs*—Mustapha, our guide and the Shekh of the caravan; Ismael (Ishmael) and Abdool Assiz (the slave of the Excellent,) who own a part of the camels; and Hadgi Ahmed, the conductor of a part of the caravan. Among the camel-drivers on foot were Moses, Mahommed of El Arish, Hassan, Hadgi Ibrahim (Abraham,) Mahommed of Gaza, Said, Khaleel, Mahommed, a lad, and Selim and Salina, two Bedouins.

*Turks*—Hadgi Ibrahim, of Damascus. [He was attended by a black Eunuch, and his form and size would seem to mark him out as a son of Anak. "He seemed built like a tower." Three soldiers from Erzeroum; Hadgi Suleiman (Solomon) of Dearbeker, Hadgi Younas (Jonas) of Bagdad; and Hadgi Mahmoud.

*Armenians*—Boghas (Paul) from Smyrna; one from Constantinople; Boghas and three others from Koordistan; and Tameer, who passed for a Turkish soldier, but told us privately that he was an Armenian.

*Greeks*—One from Tocat, where Martyn died, one from Anatolia, (neither of whom speak any thing but Turkish,) and Elias, a Catholic Maronite from Nazareth.

There were, also, eight women; one the mother of Elias, three Turkish, one an Arab, and three negro slaves.

At half past two, after riding five hours, we pitched our tent on the plain called Rode el Wolten. Thermometer in our tent at 79 degrees. Asked the Dervish Hadgi Mustapha what a Dervish is. He replied, "One that eats what he has to day, and trusts God for the future." "Are they priests?" "They are among Turks what priests are among Christians." "Are they Monks? or can they marry?" "Some marry, others not, as they please."—The term Hadgi, which occurs so often in the above list of names, means pilgrim, and is a title given by the Turks to all who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Greeks have adopted the word into their language,

and bestowed the title upon all who have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

### *Journey in the Desert.*

Most of the time to day we have been rising a gentle ascent, course E. and N. E. We are now in the desert, out of sight of the inhabited world.—Its appearance, however, is not so perfectly barren, as we expected to find it. Almost every where we see thistles, grass, and flowers, growing out of the sand, though thinly scattered, of stunted growth, and of a dry and withered look. When we stop, we select a good spot for our encampment, raise our tent on its two poles; and stretch out the ropes and fasten them to the earth with pins, and then arrange our trunks and boxes of books, so that they serve us for tables, chairs, and bedsteads.

*Thursday, 10.* When the caravan stops, the camels are turned out to feed on the thistles, weeds, and grass, which the desert produces. At sunset they are assembled, and made to lie down around the encampment. Yesterday afternoon four of them, which carried merchandise for an Armenian, went off, and could not be found. Two or three men were despatched in search of them. This morning they were not found, and we arranged our baggage so as to give the Armenian one of ours. The rest of the company, also, gave him assistance in carrying his baggage, and we set off at seven. Saw a mountain at a great distance on our right, and a village far off on our left. In the course of the day the four camels were found at a distance, and brought into the encampment at evening. At 2, after 7 hours travelling, we pitched our tent at Mabsima. Thermometer in the tent 84 degrees, in the sun 104 degrees.—Here is a well of what we call here in the desert, good water. The goat-skins which we took to carry water in, were new and have given the water a reddish color, and an exceeding loathsome taste.

In the evening they found, that the butter, which they had put up at Cairo for their journey, had, like the manna which the Israelites kept over night, "bred worms," so that they could not eat it.

Thrice, during the forenoon of the next day, the passports of the different companies composing the caravan were demanded, by Arab soldiers, patrolling this part of the desert for the purpose of stopping travellers who were destitute of passports. One of the soldiers had in his arms a beautiful Gazelle, which at a distance looked like a young deer.

Far off on our right hand, we saw a range of mountains. Our course in the morning was nearly E. ; afterwards it varied to nearly N. At 2, after more than seven hours travel, we pitched our tent at Jissar. Those places in the desert where there are wells, or where caravans are accustomed to encamp, have in consequence received names.— We give the names as they were repeated to us by our guide. Our road hitherto has been alternately loose, moveable sand, and hard sand mixed with gravel.

The singular combination of events, described in the following paragraph, took place during this day.

After some refreshment, we took a Persian Testament, and Genesis in Arabic, and went to Hadgi Mohammed, the Dervish. We sat down with him on his blanket spread on the sand, with the sun beating on our heads, and then showed him our books. He reads well in Persian and Arabic. Of the other Dervishes, not one knows how to read. While we were reading with him, most of the Dervishes, and several Turks and Armenians, gathered around and listened. Mohammed read in Genesis, and said it was *very good*. Another Turk then took it, and read that God *rested* on the seventh day, and said angrily, that it was infidelity to say that God *rested*. Mr. Wolf tried to explain, but to no purpose, till he said he had given such a book to the Mufti of Jerusalem, who said it was good. This argument silenced him at once. We gave the book of Genesis to Mahommed. While we were sitting with him, Elias the Maronite began to beat his mother, because she did not cook his victuals as he wished. Mr. Wolf went to him, and reproved him severely for such conduct. The turks said *tauntingly*, "He is a Christian." We were glad they heard

Mr. Wolff's admonition, in which he shewed them how inconsistent his behavior was with the commands of the Gospel. The unnatural man at length relented, and went to his mother and kissed her hand in token of acknowledgment. Towards evening two Turks had a dispute which finally led to blows. Hadgi Ibrahim (the Anakite) interfered, and, by loud words and a few blows settled the quarrel. After this, the Dervish Mustapha became very angry with his ass, and, like Balaam, fell to beating him, and concluded by calling him a *Jew*.

During the next day, they beheld several flocks of sheep and goats, guarded by Bedouin shepherds, and feeding on the scanty vegetation which the wilderness affords. One of the flocks, from which our travellers purchased a lamb, contained about 300 sheep and goats. The shepherd and two boys were spinning cotton with a small spindle, as they walked about surrounded by the objects of their care. They also met a caravan of 150 camels going to Cairo.

As they proceeded in a northeasterly direction, they found less vegetation, and more sand and hills than heretofore.

The necessity for their travelling on the sabbath, was imperious, they being in the midst of the desert, four days from any human dwelling, with a scanty supply of provisions, with no water which was not exceedingly offensive, and with a company of 70 persons, who would all be likely to suffer by delay. In the afternoon pitched their tents near a grove of palm-trees.

*Monday, 14.* Hitherto we had generally enjoyed a refreshing north wind, which has served to mitigate the heat, and rendered our journey less tedious, than we had feared it would be. This morning a strong scorching wind from the S. E. commenced. It was indeed distressing. The air sometimes seemed as if it issued from the mouth of an oven. Many of the Arabs bound a handkerchief over their mouths and

noses, as a defence against it. After riding six hours and a half, we pitched our tent on the plain of Loolia, near a well of miserable water. The thermometer in our tent stood at 99 degree. The country we passed was full of sand hills. The wind sometimes blew the sand over the hills like snow in a storm. This has been a dreadful day.

To avoid the heat of the day, they arose at midnight, and resumed their journey at one in the morning. They continued travelling till noon.

The wind continued from S. E. during the night, and we anticipated another dreadful day. But in the forenoon it changed to the S. W. and we were refreshed by a cooling breeze.—The night was so cloudy that not a star appeared. The loaded camels, which during the day travel like a flock, were all tied together when we travelled in the night. One is surprised to see how the Arabs, who are accustomed to the desert, will find their way in a dark night. After 11 hours ride, we pitched our tent at Aboo Jilbana. After the heat of yesterday, and our ride last night, we all find ourselves unwell.

*On the Shore of the Mediterranean.*

Wednesday, 16. Resumed our journey at five in the morning. Soon came upon a harder road than we had found for several days. It was at no great distance from the Sea. The salt water had overflowed it, and had been evaporated by the sun, leaving a considerable thickness of salt on the ground.—At 2, we came upon the shore of the Mediterranean, where the waves were rolling, and foaming, and breaking, in a most beautiful and majestic manner. Turning from the sea-shore, and passing over a mountain of sand, we came in a little while to El Arish, a village situated in the desert. At Messaoudia, a watering place on the sea-shore, the caravan separated, and one part took a different route for Gaza. After riding ten hours and a half, we pitched our tent on the plain near the village. Our shekh belongs to this place. When he and his attendants met with their friends we had an opportunity to observe a curious mode of salutation.—They took each other by the hand, put their foreheads together and smacked

their lips, but without bringing their faces in contact. They repeated this joining of foreheads and distant kissing four or five times, saying, "Peace;" "Well;" "Thank God;" "How are you?" "Thank God?" "Peace." "God give you peace." "God bless you."

In conversation with the Greek, who is from Tocat, he told us that there are in that place 100 or 150 Greek houses, a bishop, six priests, and two churches. One priest is from Greece, and knows Greek; the rest understand only Turkish, though they perform their service in Greek, repeating the words, parrot-like, without understanding them.

Messrs. Fisk and King represent the Arabs as exceedingly profane in respect to the divine Name, using it with very little reverence and continually invoking it in confirmation of trifles and falsehoods.

They now began to witness some cultivated fields, and a degree of verdure, for which the sandy hills of the desert were gratefully exchanged.—About the middle of the next day, which was Friday, and the twelfth since leaving Cairo, they had a shower of rain. Soon after they crossed the valley of Zaaka.

*Entrance into Syria.*

After riding nine hours and a half, we pitched our tent at Bur el Khoor, a large plain covered with grass and shrubs, on which several large flocks of sheep and goats were feeding, under the direction of Arab shepherds and shepherdesses.—We walked up to the top of a sand hill near our tent, where we had a delightful view of the plain. After being so long in the wilderness, this view was indeed cheering. We have now just left the dominions of Mohammed Ali Pasha, and entered modern Syria. Whether we are yet within the limits of ancient Palestine, or not, we do not know. The valley of Zaaka is no doubt a torrent in the rainy season. Possibly this is the river of Egypt. See Gen. xv, 18, and Josh. xv, 4. If so, we are already in the promised land. While in the desert, we have found comfort in singing,

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land.



From the top of the hill, near our tent, we lifted up our eyes and looked "northward and southward, and eastward," and thought of the dangers we had escaped, and of the prospect before us. How trying it must have been to Moses, after wandering forty years in the wilderness, to be told that he must not enter the good land which his eyes beheld. In the evening read the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of Deuteronomy, which were extremely interesting to us at this time. We are now entering the land of Canaan.

*Saturday, 19.* In the morning we found that some bold Bedouin had made his way into our encampment, and carried off a saddle. Mustapha went out, and, finding a Bedouin, charged him with stealing it, and began to chastise him. He gave a signal, and a number of armed Bedouins made their appearance at a distance. The surrounding country was full of them; and, as all would be likely to unite together in case of a disturbance, it was thought prudent to leave them in quiet possession of the saddle, and to proceed as soon as possible. At 6, the caravan moved off the ground. As we proceeded, we found a gradual increase of vegetation, and cultivated fields became more frequent.—At half past 10, we passed a well of water and some ruins. Two pillars of grey granite were standing. The place is called *Rafa*. This is probably the ancient Rophia, which was the first town in Syria, Rhinocalura (probably El Arish) being the last in Egypt. At half past 11, after crossing a mountain which is called on one of our maps a continuation of Mount Seir, we came to the village Khan Yoanas (the Inn of Jonas,) the first village we have seen in Syria. It is surrounded by gardens, and is inhabited by Mussulmans, who have a tradition that the Prophet Jonas once was here. East of it on a hill is another Mussulman village.

From Khan Yoanas we travelled several hours over a wide and beautiful plain, filled with herds of camels, sheep and goats, which were generally tended by Bedouin women. This is the ancient land of the Philistines.—Here we were continually harassed by the Bedouins, who seemed to spring up like Hydras in every corner.

*Missionary Herald.*

#### ORDINATIONS AND INSTALATIONS.

The Rev. ELAM C. CLARK was, on the 13th of April, ordained over the Pacific Congregational Church and Society, in Providence. Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Wisner, of Boston; Sermon by the Rev. Thomas M'Auley, D. D. L. L. D. of N. York; Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Williston, of East-Hampton, Mass.; the Charge by the Rev. Dr. Patten, of Newport; the Righthand of Fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Wood, of Barrington and the Concluding Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Holmes, of New-Bedford.

February 4, the Rev. RUFUS AUSTIN PUTNAM was ordained over the Church in Fitchburg. Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Ebenezer Perkins; Sermon by the Rev. John M. Putnam, from 1 Thes. 2, 4. Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. David Palmer; Charge by the Rev. Cyrus Mann; Fellowship of the churches by the Rev. Alonzo Phillips; Address to the people by the Rev. E. L. Clark; Concluding Prayer by the Rev. George Fisher.

April 21, the Rev. MOSES PATRIDGE was ordained over the Second Church in Plymouth; Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Hemenway of Wareham; Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Ide of Midway, from 1 Thes. 5, 25, *Pray for us*. Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Cobb of Rochester; Charge to the Pastor by the Rev. Mr. Wright of Carver; Fellowship of the Churches by the Rev. Mr. Hunn; Address to the Church by the Rev. Mr. Cobb, concluding prayer by the Rev. Mr. Lincoln of Falmouth.

April 28, the Rev. PRINCE HAWES was installed Pastor of the Evangelical Church, in South Boston. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Wisner, from 1 Cor. 9, 16.

The Rev. ARTEMAS BOYES has been recently installed Pastor of the Church, in South Hadley. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Osgood of Springfield.

#### ERRORS IN THE 4TH NO.

P. 103, first col. 1st line from the bottom, for *foundation* read *fountain*—p. 106, second col. 20th line from the top, for *fully and clearly* read *truly and fairly*—p. 107, first col. 10th line from the top, for *life* read *hope*.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. Mathetes, Alethes and Theophilus are received.